

EFFICIENT HOUSEKEEPING

GETTING RID OF SPOTS AND STAINS

From a Correspondent

To-day the professional dry-cleaning of clothes, carpets, and upholstery is so satisfactory that we are apt to forget home remedies for spots and stains. This is a pity, for accidents still occur when spilt ink, fruit juice, or other liquids spoil an otherwise fresh garment or piece of furniture. Prompt measures can soon remedy the damage, whereas, however skilled the later cleaning, fine materials may suffer from the necessary chemicals used.

We must also remember a few cures for stains when spring cleaning time comes round, for however careful our house-keeping we may suffer from baths spoiled by hard water, marble mantelpieces discoloured, and other signs of wear and tear.

Certainly the most important thing to remember when dealing with liquids spilt is to act quickly, to soak up the moisture before it can penetrate firmly. Ink still remains a danger even in these days of fountain pens, but fortunately its antidotes are nearly always handy. On the carpet, sprinkle with salt to soak it up, then sponge with repeated applications of clean milk. Any garment should have the spot soaked in milk and then sponged with clean soapy water. If milk is not available lemon juice works very well or the stain may be rubbed with a ripe tomato.

STAINED LEATHER

These homely remedies can do no harm to any fabric, but if the stain has been allowed to wait overlong it may be necessary to sponge with a weak solution of salts of lemon and then rinse well. Occasionally leather chairs or table-tops are badly stained with ink and the only remedy is sponging with weak oxalic acid, but this must be quickly washed off with warm water and the leather treated with a nourishing cream.

Accidents with tea, coffee, or cocoa need prompt soaking in cold water and, if necessary, brushing with pure glycerine and then a fresh water sponging again. Grass stains on flannels or white shoes may be removed by the seemingly extraordinary method of rubbing with treacle and then washing with warm water.

GRASS MARKS

Those who have tried other and mostly useless methods of dealing with grass stains should be willing to try this. Fruit stains may be soaked in cold water, or if the material can stand it (such as a white linen cloth) place the part over a basin, stretch tightly and pour boiling water through until the stain is gone.

Grease stains are usually not much of a problem if petrol or some other solvent is handy, but not everyone knows that eucalyptus is most effective and does not leave the usual "ring." For grease-stained carpets, particularly if much is present, ironing with a hot iron over clean blotting paper will remove most of the mark and

eucalyptus may then be used to finish the cure.

When we come to spring cleaning, turpentine or paraffin will make bath cleaning much easier; a rag moistened with paraffin and then dipped in salt will usually remove stains even if of long standing. For stained marble a mixture of soft soap, whitening, and caustic potash in equal parts, applied with a brush and left, if necessary, for several days and then washed off will prove very effective.

OLD-FASHIONED CARE

Some of these old-fashioned recipes cannot be bettered, and now that marble and other traditional furnishing materials are in vogue it is necessary for us to find out how they were cared for in the past. Some of the older cookery books, with their supplements on household arts, can prove extremely helpful, and anyone who is able to pick one up will find many useful recipes. When professional help was not available many discoveries for using everyday materials were found.

When we come to cleaning silver and china there are sometimes stains caused by eggs, tea, or burning. Patient rubbing with moistened salt will often remove these stains, or it may be possible to end them by using a good make of steel wool ready impregnated with soap.

Glass decanters or bottles are often very tiresome, but if half filled with water in which is placed crushed eggshells, torn-up newspaper, or shot (obtainable from a gunsmith) and well shaken all stains should disappear, leaving the glass sparkling. All these methods are used by antique dealers, but there is one type of stain that is impossible to cure, and that is the whitish marks sometimes found in old Georgian decanters. These marks cannot be removed; therefore it is useless to waste time trying.

SPRING CLEANING MISHAPS

During spring-cleaning time when redecorating is in process we may have trouble with paint stains on clothing; if turpentine is handy, this rubbed on with a clean cloth, and the treatment repeated until the stain is gone, all will be well. Even after a day or so turpentine will usually prove effective, but if not a mixture of ammonia and turpentine used to saturate the spot two or three times and the part then washed with soap and water will settle the matter.

Finally, some advice concerning blood-stains, for in these days of revived interest in needlework we may prick our fingers occasionally. One cure is cold soapsuds to which a drop or so of kerosine has been added, but for silks or satins the safest method is to make a thick paste of starch and water, cover the spot with this mixture and allow to dry, then brush off the starch, and the stain will usually be gone without harming the finest materials.

Efficient Housekeeping.

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